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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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BASIC REGULATIONS ISSUED FOR SHOOTING OF RAILS,  
GALLINULES, WOODCOCK, DOVES, AND BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

Containing only minor changes, the basic hunting regulations prescribing daily bag and possession limits for rails, gallinules, woodcock, mourning and white-winged doves, and band-tailed pigeons, which will be in effect during the 1955-56 season, were announced today by Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay.

Except for woodcock this portion of the annual revision of the hunting regulations sets forth the "outside" dates for hunting these species of September 1, 1955, to January 10, 1956. Within this framework the various State Game Departments may make selections of their seasons for hunting these birds. The specific season dates will be published later.

Although the regulations released today contain those for the shooting of waterfowl, coots, and Wilson's snipe in Alaska where the season begins on September 1, Secretary McKay states that the detailed regulations for the hunting of migratory waterfowl and coots in the United States will not be issued until the latter part of August.

The changes are summarized as follows:

Rails and Gallinules.--The season on rails and gallinules for the Atlantic Flyway this year will be shortened from 70 to 60 days and the bag limit on these birds (except sora) will be reduced from 15 daily and 30 in possession to 10 daily and 20 in possession. These reductions have been made in recognition of reports from the State Game Departments of New Jersey and Virginia that substantial losses of clapper rail nests resulted from unusually high tides in the marsh areas of those States during May and June.

A season of 60 days and a bag and possession limit of 15 on rails (other than sora) and gallinules will be in effect for the States in the other three flyways, the same as last year.

All four flyways will again have a limit of 25 sora daily and in possession.

Woodcock.--The "outside" dates on woodcock will be lengthened this year by 10 days, permitting each State to select a season of 40 consecutive days within a framework of October 1 to January 20. The daily bag and possession limits will remain unchanged at 4 and 8, respectively.

Mourning Doves.---The framework for mourning doves will extend from September 1 to January 10.

Within this framework the Game Departments of States east of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas will again have a daily bag and possession limit of 8 birds and will be permitted to select seasons consisting of one of the following alternatives: (1) 35 consecutive full days; (2) two split seasons aggregating 35 full days; (3) 45 consecutive half-days; or (4) two split seasons aggregating 45 half-days. This proposal represents a lengthening of the mourning dove season in these States by 5 full days if the first or second alternative is chosen, or 5 half-days if either one of the other alternatives is selected.

For all other States, last year's daily bag and possession limit of 10 and a season of 45 full days is provided with the privilege of splitting the season without a penalty. This generally represents a lengthening of the season by 5 days.

White-winged Doves.---In Texas, the closed season on white-winged doves will remain in effect. White-winged dove seasons in Arizona and in Imperial and Riverside Counties in California will conform with the mourning dove seasons in those States. In Arizona, the daily bag and possession limit on mourning doves and white-winged doves will be increased from 10 to 15, of which not more than 10 may be mourning doves.

Waterfowl, Coots, and Wilson's Snipe in Alaska.---Instead of zoning by judicial districts, the regulations this year will provide a general season on waterfowl and coots for the entire territory extending from September 1 to November 22, an over-all increase of 8 days over last year's seasons. Bag and possession limits on waterfowl and coots will remain unchanged. Zoning for Wilson's snipe will also be eliminated but the season will be lengthened by 15 days, beginning on September 1. Daily bag and possession limits on this species will remain at 8.

The regulations for the shooting of band-tailed pigeons and scoter, sider, and old-squaw ducks remain unchanged from last year.

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